



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

March 25, 2008

The Honorable Martha Fuller Clark, Chairman
Energy, Environment, and Economic Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 1579 - FN, establishing a commission to study issues relating to land development and land development regulation in New Hampshire.

Dear Chairman Fuller Clark:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1579-FN which would establish a commission to study issues relating to land development and land regulation in New Hampshire. The Department of Environmental Services supports this bill.

New Hampshire has just experienced over two decades of high growth, which is expected to continue into the future. This growth will continue to pose many challenges at the local, regional and state level that need to be addressed in an integrated fashion going forward to ensure the right balance between economic development and environmental protection. These challenges increase every year in part because the "easy" sites have been developed in many communities, leaving sites for development that are more complex and that frequently include, or are near, more environmentally sensitive areas. It is well recognized that land development has environmental impacts and that these can be better managed: Stormwater quality can be improved, development footprints can be reduced, important wetlands resources afforded better protection, and drinking water supplies better preserved for a sustainable future. It is also recognized that these environmental concerns need to be considered in concert with the need to sustain a strong economy and address related issues such as development of affordable housing to maintain a competitive work force.

HB 1579 creates a commission with diverse membership that will provide for a robust examination and discussion of these issues. This will lead to an evaluation of existing regulatory structures at the local and state level, and consideration of the possibility to develop more creative and effective alternatives for land development regulation.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the bill. Please feel free to call me at 271-3503, or Rene Pelletier at 271-2951, if you have any questions or need additional information or support.

Very truly yours,


for Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Representative Day